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ABSTRACT

Described is the development and implementation of a competency based training program in special education administration. The historical development and components (including individualized and field-centered instruction) of the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) are reviewed. Implementation of such a model is seen to involve six steps: needs assessment, competency identification, designation of competency components, preparation of instruction, assessment, and program organization. Use of the SEATP model to develop other competency based training programs is discussed. (CL)

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COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS: A GENERIC MODEL

SECOND EDITION

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[redacted]

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CONTENTS

A. INTRODUCTION 1

1. PURPOSE 2

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS 4

B. PROGRAM DESIGN 7

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT. 7
   a. The "Administrator of Special Education" Position 7
      (1) Purpose of special education. . .8
      (2) Population to be served 9
      (3) Categorical legislation and funding sources 9
   b. Indicators of Training Needs. . . . 10
   c. Minnesota Needs 12
   d. Competency-Based Education. 13

2. PROJECT COMPONENTS. 18
   a. Competency-Based Orientation. . . . 20
   b. Empirical Derivation of Competencies. 20
   c. Core Competencies 21
   d. Individualized Instruction. 22
   e. Field-Centered Instruction. 22
   f. Curriculum. 23
   g. Performance Evaluation. 23

C. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION 25

1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT. 25

2. COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION 26
   a. Goal Analysis 27
   b. Job Analysis. 28

3. COMPETENCY COMPONENTS 29

4. PREPARATION OF INSTRUCTION. 32

5. ASSESSMENT. 32
   a. Performance Assessment. 34
   b. Cognitive Assessment. 35

6. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION. 39
   a. Eligibility 39
   b. Cognitive Domain-Referenced Testing 39
   c. Instruction 40
   d. Evaluation. 41
   e. Credit. 41

D. OUTREACH OF THE GENERIC MODEL 42

1. LEAD PERSONNEL FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION 42

2. EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS SERVING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. 43

3. PROJECTED PROGRAMS. 44

E. CONCLUSION. 45

REFERENCES. 47

COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS: A GENERIC MODEL

A. Introduction

A competency-based training program is an approach to the systematic organization of instructional materials, media, and experiences with an end goal of optimizing the one job performance of an individual who has been trained in utilizing this technique. The use of the word *competency* in the phrase "competency-based training" does not imply that all other programs which use a somewhat different style or system to train individuals are incompetent programs. It is generally accepted that competency-based training programs are not appropriate for all individuals for all particular situations. However, if the word competency is to be safely defined as one who is adequately trained for the purpose or has sufficient or entry level skills as opposed to the word proficient which implies a high degree of competence through training, the problem of expecting too much from a competency-based training program is alleviated.

Thus far, one model has been detailed in conjunction with competency-based training programs, the Special Education Administration Training

Program (SEATP). As a result of this program model, other programs can be adopted and utilized to train administrators in other vocational areas. Two such programs have been proposed for this purpose at the University of Minnesota: a model for competency-based training of lead personnel for special needs programs in vocational education, and a model for competency-based training of administrators in early education programs serving handicapped children.

The following material will detail competency-based training programs which are currently being used and planned in the state of Minnesota for possible nationwide adoption and distribution.

1. PURPOSE

In September, 1973, the University of Minnesota began operating a new training program for special education administrators. Known as the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP), the project is a joint venture between two departments of the University: Departments of Special Education and Educational Administration. It is supported by a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, United States Office of Education, and by funds from the University of Minnesota.

The program is designed simultaneously to meet a current, pressing need in Minnesota and also to serve as a model that can be replicated in training administrators and practitioners in other areas of human services (e.g., practitioners and administrators of day activity centers, group homes, nursing homes, etc.). In addition, the general model of this program may be applied to preparation programs for other types of positions.

The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) is a competency-based education program developed from a systems orientation model

and used for continuing education of professional administrators to promote educational effectiveness and efficiency.

A competency-based (or performance-based) preparation program is one in which

> *...performance goals are specified, and agreed to, in rigorous detail in advance of instruction. The student must either be able to demonstrate his abilities or perform job tasks. He is held accountable, not for passing grades, but for attaining a given level of competency... the training institution is itself held accountable for producing able practitioners. Emphasis is on demonstrated produce or output.* (Elam, 1971, pp. 1-2)

The Special Education Administration Training Program's (SEATP) utilization of a competency-based approach is an attempt to focus on education directly applicable to the special education administrator's actual job. As a result, the program (SEATP) will better accommodate individual educational needs; and, in addition, the procedures developed to identify and validate competencies will promote prompt changes in the existing curriculum sequence to meet changing conditions and to facilitate replication of the model elsewhere.

The requirement that competency-based programs be able to demonstrate the proficiency of each trainee implies that they are data based. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) uses a systems approach to identify each component of the training development sequence and to attempt to assure sufficient information for making decisions at each point. The systems orientation also contributes substantially to ease of program modification and replication.

The Special Education Administration Training Program is a continuing education program which can

be pursued by the employed director of special education. This procedure has the advantage of enabling more directors of special education to participate than would be possible with traditional on-campus training programs. It is also more efficient for participants, both in terms of time and in cost, especially after the initial program development phase is completed. The program, therefore, can readily be offered on either a preservice or inservice basis, because of the nature of the competencies toward which the program is directed (minimum essential on the job performances).

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms and definitions are pertinent to this study as well as to the area of educational administration:

- Accreditation: the process by which an agency or organization evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined qualifications or standards.
- Certification: the process by which an agency or association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association. Such qualifications may include graduation from an accredited or approved program and/or acceptable performance on a qualifying examination or series of examinations.
- Credentialing: the recognition of professional or technical competence. The credentialing process may include registration, certification, licensure, professional association membership, or the award of a degree in the field, in the formal sense; or, in the informal sense, recognition of competence by virtue of designated function (i.e., in-house credentialing).
- Discipline: a branch of knowledge and learning in which a person has received certain education and

training. Persons may function at various levels and with differing amounts of responsibility, within a discipline, depending upon the degree or amount of education, training, and experience.

- Equivalency Testing: the comprehensive evaluation of knowledge acquired through alternate learning experience as a substitute for established educational requirements.
- Functional Area: a division of service within an institution, in which tasks are performed by persons who have been trained and educated in related disciplines or who are working in related personnel categories.
- In-House Credentialing: the currently employed, informal process by which an institution determines that an individual meets the necessary requirements for a particular role, and possesses the qualifications necessary to perform a given task or group of tasks as part of that role, when that individual's qualifications to perform in that role have not been evaluated by a formal credentialing mechanism (i.e., licensure, certification or registration). An institution might in-house credential an individual for a particular role by satisfying itself that the individual had been adequately prepared to function in that role by any or all of the following means: completion of a formal program of education in a related field; on the job training and work experience; or proficiency or equivalency determination by formal examination or observation.
- Institutional Credentialing: a component of the process of institutional licensure. This component would entail the formalization of the current process of in-house credentializing by which an institution determines that an individual meets the necessary requirements for a particular role. This determination would attest that the individual possess the qualifications and competencies necessary to perform a given task or group of tasks as part of that role. The measures to be employed in determining an individual's competence to perform might include on the job observation of the quality of performance

as well as others, such as written, oral, and practical examinations.

- Institutional Licensure: in concept, a process by which an agency external to the institution would accredit an institution which provides education to credential, by appropriate methods, certain categories of its personnel under the aegis of the institutional license. The credentialing would be carried out by the institution, but the process would be monitored and approved by an external agency, either public or private. This approval would confer upon the institution the authority to credential personnel (as approved) under the standard operating license.
- Licensure: the process by which an agency of government grants permission to an individual who, or institution which, has met predetermined qualifications to engage in a given occupation or function and/or use a particular title.
- Personnel Category: a job role in which persons with similar education and training may perform. A personnel category is characterized by the kinds of tasks which are performed. Also, requirements are usually established for individuals to work in a given personnel category, e.g., type, and number of years, or educational preparation and training.
- Proficiency Testing: an assessment of the technical knowledge and skills related to the performance requirements of a specific job. Such knowledge and skills may have been acquired through formal or informal means.
- Registration: the process by which qualified individuals are listed on an official roster maintained by a governmental or nongovernmental agency. Acceptable performance on a qualifying examination or series of examinations may or may not be required.

(Tucker & Wetterau, 1975, pp. viii-x)

With the above definitions detailed, the following sections--program design, program implementation, and outreach of the generic model--will be easier to understand.

B. Program Design

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

a. THE "ADMINISTRATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION" POSITION. Special education programs and services for handicapped children have expanded during the last decade at an unprecedented rate. This sharp acceleration in services is due to a number of factors, including philosophical acceptance of the right of all children to an education, advocacy from parents of exceptional children as well as school personnel for special services, litigation and legislation requiring public schools to provide special services, and increased state and federal funding for initiation and ongoing support of such programs.

This increase in the number of services appears to be progressing with expanding sophistication in the field. Research and demonstration programs have provided insights into the manner in which exceptional children learn, and appropriate instructional technology has been developed to cope with the problems. Many studies have also recommended new conceptualizations of service models and organization patterns to facilitate pupil learning and efficient use of resources.

One of the most prominent of these trends is the philosophy referred to in its various guises as "mainstreaming," "normalization," or "the principle of least restrictive alternatives." It implies that the traditional methods of providing special education services need to be thoroughly reexamined. Meisgeier and King (1970), for example, state the following:

> *The main alternative to a regular class has been placement in a special self-contained class. However, new sequential arrangements of instructional alternatives suggest that only a small number*

> *of exceptional children will require self-contained settings. The greatest number may be able to remain in the main system if resource help is available and if that system makes use of concepts such as differentiated staffing and provides viable mechanisms for the individualization of instruction.* (p. ix)

As the school's capability to accommodate handicapped children in regular education programs increases, the organization of special education services must change accordingly.

> *In the past, general education focused on the "modal" or large group of typical children within the school population; special education was delegated the responsibility for educating those children who fell into disability categories defined by general educators as being children unsuited for the general educational program. But events in recent years indicate that these two quasi-distinct educational systems will converge, and the next decade may see all children and teachers within the parameters of education.* (Weatherman, 1968, p. 17)

However, as these changes take place, a parallel trend has been establishment of separate administrative units for special education programs. The number of directors and other administrators of special education programs have been growing rapidly. A number of reasons account for this trend and these can best be examined within the content of the following broad rationale.

> *(1) Purpose of special education.* A general purpose for which special education is organized is to provide interventions designed to remedy or ameliorate those conditions which

thwart normal development. The responsible organizational unit must include not only special teachers, materials, etc., but also provisions for effective advocacy of exceptional children's rights and needs, and expertise to plan and supervise special education interventions and to ensure ongoing communications within the school system and within appropriate community agencies.

(2) Population to be served. Although many mildly handicapped children can be served in mainstream programs with appropriate support, schools are also being asked to provide comprehensive services for severely and multiply impaired children who were previously considered "uneducable," and who require intensive, expensive services. These services are often provided in conjunction with nonschool agencies, in cooperation with other school districts, or by intermediate districts, rather than by the district in which the child resides; however, the local school district retains responsibilities for program monitoring and tuition payments.

(3) Categorical legislation and funding sources. Most states provide categorical state funding for special education services, and increased federal support for special education has become available. These factors have created needs for efficient planning, supervision, and accountability for these multiple funding sources.

Program development, organization, and supervision involve many complex responsibilities for the director of special education. A director of special education, oftentimes, is expected to be a specialist in a variety of functions which can be classified as follows:

- devising ways of identifying children with special needs;
- assessing children with special needs in order to determine what kinds of special programs and

services should be provided;

- planning the appropriate variety of interventions or program alternatives to mediate properly between the child's special education needs and tasks of rehabilitation and/or educational development;
- marshalling and organizing the resources needed in a comprehensive program of special education for exceptional children;
- directing, coordinating, and counseling appropriately in guiding the efforts of those engaged in the special education enterprise;
- evaluating and conducting research in order to improve special instruction and the quality of special services;
- interpreting and reporting information to gain public support and influence the power structure in helping to achieve program objectives; and,
- recruitment, selection and training of competent staff.

(Weatherman, 1968, p. 11)

b. INDICATORS OF TRAINING NEEDS. In the past, colleges and universities have placed little emphasis on education of special education administrators.

Milazzo and Blessing reported in 1964 that of 225 colleges and universities preparing special education personnel, only 40 offered programs in administration and supervision. Only eight programs offered a sequence of general administration courses, and Milazzo and Blessing reported a need for specific training and experience in administrative endeavors. Willenberg (1966) noted the "paucity of specific research on administration of special education" (p. 134) and described several obstacles which might account for this lack. Connor (1970) noted "an intermittent and slow rate of interest in specifying and upgrading standards of preparation" (p. 373).

More recently, Vance and Howe (1974), in a follow-up study of students who had received federal

training grants, noted that most special education administrator training was provided at the doctoral level.

> *This is expensive, time consuming and ignores the need for training at the subdoctoral level for those individuals just beginning a career at the management level in special education.* (p. 121)

Vance and Howe also indicated needs for competence in general administrative processes and practices as a result of the mainstreaming movement, skills in understanding the implications of due process, and internship opportunities.

In considering development of preparation programs for these directors, however, a further need becomes apparent: the lack of precise definition of the curriculum due to the frequent ambiguity of the special education administrator's role.

Unlike the role of a school principal or business agent for a school district, the role of the special education administrator has been determined by factors such as state laws and regulations, educational practices in the national, state, regional or local programs for which he/she is responsible, and the philosophy toward handicapped children which exists in his/her organizational unit. A recent discussion (Kohl & Marro, 1971) commented:

> *It is difficult to define the typical duties of this leader since he is found in different administrative patterns and has a variety of titles with little relationship to specific functions.* (p. 9)

In addition to variations in job descriptions among directors, further ambiguity is created by the differing ways in which other staff in the school district and community perceive the director's role, creating discrepant expectations of the administrator of special education (Hensley, 1973).

Despite these variations in role definition, however, some studies have noted a convergence on typical or most pressing problems encountered by special education directors in Minnesota, as perceived by the directors themselves (Bilyeu, 1973; Wedl, 1973).

c. MINNESOTA NEEDS. Inadequate educational opportunities, insufficient role definition, a lack of relevant research on administrator preparation, the need for education at the subdoctoral level, and the need for administrative competencies are all national factors of which the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) planners were aware. With the above national factors and further research, the SEATP planners were able to indicate training needs of special education specific to the state of Minnesota.

As in other emergent fields, growth in special education programs has meant that the demand for qualified personnel has exceeded the available supply. To staff expanding programs, persons with minimal experience and certification have been hired, creating needs for inservice or continuing education programs. Spriggs (1972) indicated that this is true for administrators as well as special education teachers. The majority of directors or administrators of special education programs had assumed their present positions recently; for most, their present positions are their first administrative ones. Spriggs also indicated a high degree of educational level for new special education administrators. As a group, entry level administrators usually have a masters degree in a particular special education disability area or teaching specialty. They tend to be young, with three to five years of teaching or related professional experience, but with limited administrative experience.

The educational background of these new special education administrators tends to be somewhat different from that of the typical administrator in

education. Generally, education administrators assume their titles and positions only after completing a certification program in school administration, but the special education administrator typically enters without a certification program in education or other administration or management training.

Directors of special education are often promoted by their employing school districts into administrative positions. New directors are oftentimes selected for their positions because of demonstrated success as special education teachers or for a variety of other reasons. The disproportionate number of special education administrators in Minnesota who were formerly school psychologists or speech pathologists suggests that selection might be influenced by prior visibility and interactions with other administrators within the district. Demonstrated administrative competence does not appear to be the major selection criterion.

Districts with new special education administrators are frequently rural or small town interdistrict special education cooperatives located beyond commuting distance from the Twin Cities. The special education administrator is usually hired on a 12-month contract. Consequently, a new director is not in a position to leave his/her job and return to a university or college program for administrative preparation either during the school year or in the summer. Furthermore, new administrators are expected both by the organizations in which they work and by the State Department of Education to administer the program successfully, and, when necessary, to learn on the job.

d. COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION. Traditionally, preparation programs for teachers and administrators of educational programs consisted of a set of experiences which the prospective practitioner must undergo prior to receiving licensure or certification in his/her profession. Such programs tended not to specify in

detail the tasks prospective educationists needed to be able to do or accomplish to qualify for licensure, nor was there any objective guarantee that graduates of such programs had been prepared to perform the tasks actually expected of them once they actually assumed teaching or administrative position.

Criticisms of traditional teacher preparation programs have been mounting since the 1960's, and the sources of discontent are varied. Some sources of dissatisfaction are general, including the increasing awareness in the last decade of lack of progress in meeting inadequacies in education and the implications that vastly improved preparation requirements are necessary both to meet changing conditions and to maintain the viability of public educational systems. In addition, demands for relevance of preparation programs have increased, resulting in demands for participation of present and prospective teachers in determining education goals and methods. Another source of demands for change in teacher preparation programs comes from advances made in the art and science of teaching. Technological development, experimental instructional models, and the increased availability of federal funds to support these research and development efforts have enhanced the possibility that improvements in fact could be made; and, undergirding all of these is the increasing pressure for accountability in educational programs.

The AACTE Committee on Performance-Based Teacher Education (1974) has offered the following definition of competency- or performance-based teacher education:

1. *The instructional program is designed to bring about learner achievement of specified competencies (or performance goals) which have been*

   - *derived from systematic analysis of the performance desired as end product (usually that of recognized practitioners) and*
   - *stated in advance of instruction in terms which make it possible to*

determine the extent to which competency has been attained.

2. *Evidence of the learner's achievement*

   - *is obtained through assessment of learner performance, applying criteria stated in advance in terms of expected levels of accomplishment under specified conditions and*
   - *is used to guide the individual learner's efforts, to determine his rate of progress and completion of the program and, ideally, to evaluate the efficacy of the instructional system and add to the general body of knowledge undergirding the instructional process.*

The foregoing implies, of course, that:

1. *Instruction is individualized to a considerable extent.*
2. *Learning experiences are guided by feedback to the learner.*
3. *The program as a whole has the characteristics of a system.*
4. *Emphasis is on exit or outcome requirements.*
5. *The learner is considered to have mastered the program only when he has demonstrated the required level of performance.*
6. *The instructional program is not time-based in units of fixed duration.* (p. 7)

The terms "competency-based" and "performance-based" education are often used to refer to the same movement. "Performance-based" terminology stresses the manner in which the learner demonstrates knowledge and skills and implies that knowledge gained

must be employed in overt action. "Competency-based" terminology stresses the notion of a minimum standard for effective performance. Both identifiers connote educational programs that go beyond knowledge for its own sake, and emphasize performance and consequence of actions (Houston, 1974).

In the majority of cases, competency- or performance-based education has been used for teacher preparation; less use has been made of the concept in developing or organizing training programs for school administrators. Although competency-based preparation for school administrators is required or recommended as a basis for certification in Minnesota and other states, specification of competencies often has not yet reached the level of behavioral or at least measurable objectives (e.g., Dederick, 1973). In addition, most of the competency-based education literature is concerned with undergraduate preservice preparation of teachers, and less use is made of the concept for graduate continuing education programs.

Despite the lack of many precedents for competency-based continuing education programs for administrators, educational needs seen by Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) planners suggested that a competency-based approach might well be appropriate and effective for this program. The emphasis on performance goals, systematically defined and derived from the performance of recognized practitioners, is relevant to the lack of role definition noted earlier. The emphasis on assessment of both learner progress and effectiveness of the instructional system permits continued refinement of a relatively experimental program in its developmental phases. In addition, the flexibility offered in delivery of services increases the probability that the program can be adapted to the variety of conditions which exist even within a given position in a single state.

In special education, factors in addition to those mentioned above have resulted in changes in

training programs. The field has grown at an unprecedented rate--both in numbers of pupils served and in sophistication of practitioners.

Among the changes in training programs for special education has been the recently passed Public Law 94-142, "Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975." In this Act, Congress found the purpose to be the following:

> *...to assume that all handicapped children have available to them...a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents or guardians are protected, to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all handicapped children and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children.* (89 Stat. 775)

There have also been major shifts in orientation (e.g., away from the "medical model") which have created training and retraining needs; and, another source of demand is the number of persons in special education programs not appropriately certified, despite the general oversupply of teachers, and who require training programs that are at one and the same time entry level training and continuing education.

In response to these conditions, the movement toward competency-based or performance-based teacher education (CBTE or PBTE) has emerged. Advocates of competency-based education programs assert that benefits of adopting this approach will be felt throughout the educational system, and the payoffs are both immediate and long range. Competency- or performance-based teacher education (CBTE/PBTE) promises:

Long range (10 years)	*To improve quality of instruction in the nation's schools, and in consequence to improve teacher education.*
Intermediate range (4-10 years)	*To prepare knowledgeable and skillful teachers in a curriculum whose elements have been tested for validity against criteria of school effectiveness.*
Short range (0-4 years)	*To identify tentative teacher competencies, to prepare instructional materials and evaluation procedures, and to establish conditions to validate teacher education curricula and promote teacher behavior research.*
Almost immediate	*Stronger relationships between teacher educators, public schools and the organized teaching profession.*
	Greater student satisfaction with skill-oriented teacher education programs.
	Increased accountability of teacher education programs.

(Rosner & Kay, 1974, p. 294)

2. PROJECT COMPONENTS

The University of Minnesota has had a preparation program for administrators of special education for a number of years. Like most conventional

programs, it has been an on-campus program, focusing on training a limited number of persons at the doctoral level.

To reach the majority of new directors for whom the existing degree program may not be appropriate, the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) has been developed as an alternative education sequence. This program has not only been designed specifically as a response to the conditions previously indicated, but it is also seen as having the potential for widespread adoption for training special education administrators in other states or for training administrators and practitioners of other human services programs. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) has seven basic features:

- The objectives are stated as competencies of a director of special education.
- These competencies or performances are derived empirically from examination of the job which existing special education directors perform.
- There exists an identifiable core of minimum essential competencies for all director of special education positions, despite variations in individual job descriptions, scope of authority, line or staff designation, size of program, and single or multi-district organization. These core competencies constitute the program curriculum.
- Instruction received by a participating director of special education is based on individual needs as determined by prior and ongoing assessments.
- Instruction is field- rather than campus-based.
- The types of instruction offered emphasize teaching of facts and concepts and the practice of skills relevant to performance in the position.
- The basis for evaluation of the success of the training program is student (administrator of special education) practices, learning, and performance.

Each of the above points will be discussed in greater detail with corollary characteristics and assumptions on which these characteristics are based.

a. *COMPETENCY-BASED ORIENTATION*. The first characteristic of this program, its competency-based orientation, reflects a number of current educational trends. The recent press for accountability in educational programs, the desire to reduce fragmentation and overlap in training sequences, the need to individualize instruction, and the advantage of communicating to the participating student what is expected have all contributed to the emergence of competency-based training programs in teacher education.

Competency-based instructional programs assume that the competencies or performances which constitute an educational program can be identified and stated. Although some people will contend that this is a controversial point in competency-based teacher education, the results from needs assessment activities and review of literature in the field of special education administration strongly suggest that competencies in this area can be identified and stated.

b. *EMPIRICAL DERIVATION OF COMPETENCIES*. Traditional training programs attempting to convert to the competency orientation have sometimes tended to rely on the judgments of university faculty as a means of deriving competencies. The second Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) characteristic is the method of derivation of competencies for this training program which has been done by surveying the population at which the training program is directed. Although a consensus on competencies by experienced special education administrators at local, regional and state levels, and college and university faculty has been obtained, a study of the role and function of the director of special education and observation of Minnesota special education directors has also been used to empirically derive those tasks and those performances which constitute the special education administrator's job. Competencies for this trainprogram have been derived from these needs assessment activities.

Although this basis for establishing educational program criteria may appear to assume a certain amount of stability in position description, it is recognized that any position is a dynamic and changing one and that preparation programs will require concomitant revision. Regulations, increases in knowledge in the field, and changes in accepted practices will all influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills and task capability necessary for minimum performance in a generalized position. Consequently, instructional content and performance criteria will change over time, as the job changes. The program design provides for regular periodic reassessment of competencies essential for performance of the special education administrative position. Some adjustments will be made on an ongoing basis; overall reassessments of specific competencies will be made every three years and at any time when changes in education organization, operations, legal constraints, and external forces (e.g., medical progress) suggest that the position has undergone substantial change.

c. *CORE COMPETENCIES*. The program asserts that there exists an identifiable core of minimal essential competencies for all special education directors, that they can be agreed upon, and that those competencies will form the content or curriculum of the preparation program. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) personnel are well aware of the variations which occur among specific positions in Minnesota, some of which vary systematically according to location (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural; single district or interdistrict cooperative; or size of program) and others according to range of responsibilities and amount of authority given a specific director. Additional sources of variation are idiosyncratic to the needs and desires of a particular school district. Consequently, employers recruiting prospective special education administrations may desire performances and skills not included in this training program. However, these tend to be in addition to the minimum core skills which have been identified repeatedly through

studies conducted under this training program and elsewhere. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) assumes that persons who have attained these core skills can function in an entry level position and can adapt to the variations which occur among districts.

d. *INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION*. Competency-based preparation programs make it possible to pinpoint individual needs. This program assumes that, despite a common lack of experience on the job and little prior formal preparation in education administration, new special education administrators will vary in the extent to which they have already attained the minimal essential competencies. Initial performance on domain-referenced tests of content and on performance in simulations will determine specific preparation objectives for each participant; therefore, the amount and content of instructional experiences will vary among participants. Continuing assessment throughout the course of the preparation program will also enable the program to adjust to various rates of participant learning. This accommodation to individual needs applies both for instruction conducted in a group and on an individual basis.

e. *FIELD-CENTERED INSTRUCTION*. A prominent feature of this program is the location of instruction. Special education administrators tend to be scattered throughout the state. Because of their 11- and 12-month contracts, they are generally unable to attend classes held on the University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities. Instruction under this preparation program is therefore field centered. A number of program objectives can be met through individual study; and, ongoing group and individual meetings with field consultants (experts in specific content areas--e.g., fiscal) can be scheduled in locations close to the participants' residences and places of work. The program assumes not only that field-centered instruction will increase the possible number of participants who are willing to take

further preparation, but also that the field setting is appropriate to the instruction to be offered.

f. CURRICULUM. The content of instruction offered through the program is also distinctive; it attempts to teach basic facts (e.g., knowledge of special education laws), concepts (e.g., program budgeting) and skills (e.g., ability to develop a child study subsystem). Methods of evaluation of the program are consistent with these kinds of instruction, consisting of demonstrated retention of the facts, concepts and skills presented, and performance or application (actual or simulated) of skills taught. The assumption is made that a person can be successful on the job if he/she can demonstrate those skills and that knowledge. In many cases, application of skills taught to actual problems encountered in the administrator's ongoing cycle of activities will be required.

As indicated earlier, participants are required to be trained at the master's level prior to entry into the program; thus, philosophical considerations are not stressed, nor are there extended direct attempts to influence attitudes. However, newly appointed special education administrators can profit from interactions with experienced school administrators and with their peers (other special education directors). A field consultant network is developed and serves the following functions:

- course authors of modules;
- hotline system to participants to answer questions and help them obtain needed resources to complete curriculum;
- instructional system to offer regional seminars on modular topics from curriculum;
- evaluation system to assess/approve participants' projects and papers during coursework on modules; and
- role model for new administrators.

g. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION. The basis for evaluation of the Special Education Administration Training

Program (SEATP) is the student's (special education administrator) learning and performance. As indicated above, there is a direct relationship between training offered and methods of evaluation. No attempt is made to show effects of this preparation program on student (child) learning. One reason for this is that effects of staff development on children's progress is still not quite clear, thus, that topic generates considerable controversy within competency-based teacher education. Besides, there is little reason to believe that a *direct* result of administrator preparation will be seen from improvement in child learning, even though pupils growth and development is the purpose of all school-related activities.

Essential program characteristics, corollary characteristics, and assumptions on which these features are based are summarized below.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics	Corollaries	Assumptions
1. *Goals of the training program are stated as competencies or performances*		*Relevant goals can be identified and so stated*
2. *Performances are derived empirically from job*	*Training content and performance criteria will change over time as does job*	*This is a reasonable place to begin*
3. *Core of minimum essential competencies will be taught*	*Other performances may be desired for specific positions*	*Those skills can be agreed upon. Persons with these core skills can function in entry level positions*
4. *Instruction is based on individual needs*	*Amount and content will vary. Rate of progress will vary*	*People have varying levels of prior training, experience, and ability*
5. *Instruction is field-centered*		*In continuing education for employed persons, location must be appropriate to the training to be offered*
6. *Kinds of instruction taught--facts, concepts and skills*	*Evaluation by demonstrated retention of information and performance (actual or simulated) of skills*	*Person can be successful in job if he/she has those skills and that knowledge*
7. *Evaluate training program by student (director) learning and performance*		*There is that direct relationship. Cannot show effects on student (child) learning*

C. Program Implementation

A systems approach is used to clarify the basic phases or components involved in program development which are discussed along with examples of specific Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) procedures and instrumentation. Systems models are intentionally developed at a general level and rarely change their major elements and relationships during implementation. The focus on inputs, activities, and outputs has the advantage of being relatively independent of content, and a program stated in systems terms can be more readily adapted to any field in which similar initial conditions pertain (i.e., where performance can be observed).

In its most general form, the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) model is relatively straightforward and has many features in common with other competency-based education programs.

1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The first program development task is to identify the target position, to estimate the extent of need for training within this target population, and to describe the population.

For some education programs, surveys of needs for preparation programs may tend to be bypassed due to legislative mandate or other external directives. For others, demonstrating that there is a need for a preparation program is necessary to secure funding and other resources and may be incorporated as an ongoing function of self-examination and renewal processes.

Adoption of a competency-based approach implies that definitions of need for preparation programs are derived from and/or supported by a description of the population to be trained. Internal consensus

among faculty, although obviously desirable, is not regarded by the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) staff as sufficient to establish needs without supporting documentation obtained from the field. Information gained from this initial planning phase is useful in delimiting the content and determining organization of instruction.

The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) itself used a number of previously available sources of information in delineating the population to be educated. A review of the literature yielded summaries of the typical preparation and experience background of Minnesota special education directors (e.g., Spriggs, 1972; Bilyeu, 1973; Wedl, 1973) which, along with a review of presently available educational opportunities, suggested that priority be given to expanded and improved preparation in administrative skills for present incumbents of these positions. As the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) is implemented, data from prior training efforts provide additional sources of information regarding the target population to be trained. Other programs may wish to use similar means, or may rely on demographic studies, internal and/or field surveys, Delphi probes, etc.

2. COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION

The second component of the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) program development model is the process by which competencies or desired performances are identified. A multidisciplinary approach is used, employing two strategies (goal analysis and job analysis) which are used to cross-validate each other. Each of these strategies has previously been used as the basis for performance specification. Together the strategies present a reliable and valid description of the minimum essential performances for a particular position.

a. GOAL ANALYSIS. Goal analysis is Mager's (1972) procedure for obtaining consensus among a group of people. This procedure includes the following steps: a panel is selected; descriptive words and phrases are elicited from each panel member; and all responses are recorded. The panel then meets to edit the recorded list. Members eliminate duplication and nonessential items, fill in deficient areas, and rewrite the list in performance terms. The group then rates each item for desired level of performance, specifies the importance or centrality of achievement at the task, and agrees to the accuracy of the resulting material after it has been edited into correct statements of behavioral objectives.

The goal analysis provides the general statement of performance which, when combined with the specific skills, tasks and knowledge from the position (job) analysis, allows relevant behaviorally stated objectives to be developed for the position being studied. These competencies are then reviewed via the next procedure, Latent Partition Analysis.

Crucial to effective goal anlaysis is the composition of the panel. In the case of the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP), the special education administrator's job functions (as determined by literature review) were divided into three parts--fiscal management, personnel management, and special education program development--and separate panels of about eight persons were convened for each function. This permitted selection of specialists in specific areas to participate as panel members without making each group unduly large. Each panel included representatives from local school districts, regional consultants, State Department of Education staff, and professors of education administration and special education.

It is important to have the input of the target group as well as the expert. Each delegation contributes from its own viewpoint. Goal analysis panels that are weighted heavily with the practitioner tend to generate goals which represent the here and now. A panel of experts tends to focus on

what should be ideally and often neglects the conventional practices. The balance of the composition of the goal analysis panel is a judgment that is contingent upon the overall goal of the training project. The Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) procedure is a correcting device for overt biases on the part of the goal analysis panel.

b. JOB ANALYSIS. Job analysis, the second strategy, uses a set of procedures derived from industrial psychology for careful study of a job within an organization. It has been defined by the United States Bureau of Employment Security (1965) as:

> *...the process of identifying, by observation, interview and study, and of reporting the significant worker activities and requirements and the technical and environmental facts of a specific job. It is the identification of the tasks which comprise the job and of the skills, knowledges, abilities, and responsibilities that are required of the worker for successful performance and that differentiate the job from all others.* (p. 5)

A number of different methods may be employed in conducting a job analysis. These include questionnaires and checklists, observation, individual or group interviews, logbooks, or judgments about good and poor job performance.

Previous studies of special education administrators tended to utilize analysis of existing job descriptions and self-reporting by questionnaires sent to directors. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) job analysis used these procedures, but supplemented them with direct observation and structured interviews with a small stratified sample of the population. Tasks, skills, and knowledge reported by any of these means were

summarized, distributed to all directors for comments, and modified as needed (Weatherman & Harpaz, 1975).

Specificity and inclusiveness characterize differences between results of goal analysis and that of job analysis. Results of the job analysis included a lengthy enumeration of all those specific tasks which every Minnesota director performed. Goal analysis, on the other hand, included judgments of centrality or importance of more "global" performances and may have omitted some tasks entirely. The two procedures were used to check each other and produce a more accurate description. Also, it is recognized that position requirements have a tendency to change over time. In most positions, job requirements and competencies will not show substantial differences over time spans of less than three years. Consequently, the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) intends to repeat goal analysis and job analysis procedures every three years to revalidate performance specification as director duties and competencies change.

3. COMPETENCY COMPONENTS

Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) is a computer-assisted technique that helps to organize and clarify a set of ideas as those ideas are implicitly understood by a group of people. It is called "latent" because it reaches for the understood, but not previously expressed, concepts. It is a "partition" because it classifies or divides the ideas into concepts. It is an "analysis" in that it is a means of examining and organizing the ideas.

Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) is a free sort. That is, the people who make up the sample or population are left free to impose their own understanding upon the set of ideas. What Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) does is to tease out that framework of understanding.

The procedure, except for the computer-assisted calculations, is technical but simple. A set of ideas, in this instance competency statements, is first made into an unclassified list (goal analysis and job/task analysis). This set is printed onto cards, one competency per card. Blank cards are also provided so that additional statements can be added by individuals asked to participate in the procedure. The people whose understanding is sought then sort the cards according to instructions that leave them free to determine their own categories. The Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) computer program takes the cards, computes, and reports how the group organizes its competencies. The result is a list and a classification scheme which is most compatible with the understanding of the group.

Several features are characteristic of Latent Partition Analysis (LPA). The most salient are:

- The resulting classification scheme is likely to be different from some of the standard schemes. For example, a competency category dealing with public relations may or may not emerge. What does emerge is likely to be functional for the group.
- In spite of its superficial resemblance to factor analysis, Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) differs in that it accepts categorical data and does not imply any underlying causal factors.
- The Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) program yields, in addition to the most compatible categories, two "confusion indexes." One index warns if a particular category is not sharply defined. The other index warns if a particular competency has not been clearly fitted by the group into the category where it was placed. This last feature is useful at a later stage as well as pointing up the need to clarify the competency statement.
- Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) requires at least as many participants in the sorting as there are competency statements to sort. This is a mathematical requirement, but it may also be good strategy for the involvement of those people who will be affected by the results.

In summary, Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) is a way of organizing the participation of the people who specify competencies so as to draw out their ideas and even those ideas they had not previously put into words. It is a search for the functional categories that are latent in the thinking of a group of people.

The Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) program is operational in the University of Minnesota computer system and has been successfully used to classify other subject matter besides competencies.

An additional step to follow Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) is the assignment of priorities to the competency statements within each of the categories discovered by LPA.

The ranking of the competency statements requires first that the Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) program be run to assign the categories and their contents. Finally, it requires that the same group (or a group which has grasped the categorical structure in a thoroughly integrated manner) rank the statements within each category.

A program for ranking or prioritizing is more conventional than is Latent Partition Analysis (LPA), but a program compatible to LPA is advisable in this situation. Such a program has been devised and is operational in the University of Minnesota computer system.

The "confusion index" of individual competency statements has been mentioned previously. The prioritizing program makes use of that index as a check for internal consistency of the overall procedure. Other reliability checks are carried out as well.

Following the Latent Partition Analysis (LPA) and prioritizing, it is now possible to organize the derived competencies into an instructional system.

4. PREPARATION OF INSTRUCTION

Preparation of instruction begins by delimiting the curriculum in view of priorities established in the goal analysis and job analysis; available information on present competency levels of the target population (such as preliminary assessment results); and pragmatic considerations such as time, extent of funding, and other resources. Once the scope and sequence have been determined, course preparation begins by selection of course authors who are specialists in specific content areas.

Course authors are provided with course objectives and are responsible, during developmental phases, for selecting and/or writing appropriate reading materials and for preparing exercises on each phase of the content area to give the participant an opportunity to practice the skills being taught and to apply concepts which have been presented. (As indicated earlier, course authors [usually field consultants] have a continuing function. During operation of training, they evaluate performance on the course exercises and thus provide the participant with feedback on the extent to which concepts and skills have been mastered.)

Parallel to the development of curriculum and materials is development of the service delivery system, i.e., how will the instructional units be brought to the participants. Needs assessment data on the population to be trained and known parameters of the content of training provide some cues to delivery requirements which must be met and resources (such as field consultants) which can be utilized.

5. ASSESSMENT

The fifth component of the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) development

model--assessment--is one of its most important features. As a competency- or performance-based program, it is by definition a data-based system:

> *Assessment lies at the heart of PBTE. Goals of instruction must be stated in assessable terms; learner performance must be assessed and reassessed throughout the instructional process; evidence so obtained must be used to evaluate the accomplishments of the learner and the efficacy of the system. Remove assessment from PBTE and all that is left is an enumeration of goals and provision of instruction which hopefully will lead to their attainment--not much on which to pin one's hopes for significant improvement in an educational program.* (AACTE, 1974, p. 18)

The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) emphasis on assessment serves two major purposes similar to those just alluded to: it enables program managers to determine on an ongoing basis the extent to which participants achieve, at the criterion levels, the program's objectives; and, it permits objective determination of the appropriateness of instructional methods, content of instruction, and established criterion levels for achievement.

The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) focuses on competencies necessary for performance on the job, and thus employs two basic strategies to determine the extent to which these competencies are attained: performance assessment (using simulations of actual tasks which all special education administrators must perform) and cognitive assessment (measurement of the knowledge which a participant must have in order to perform essential job tasks). These measures are obtained on a pre and post basis.

Other data are less formal and are collected at various points prior to, during, and following the provision of instruction. They include information regarding participants' perceptions of their competencies, the training they are receiving, and results of course exercises completed in the field.

a. *PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT*. Performance assessment consists primarily of a series of special education administrator job tasks, derived from program objectives, performed in simulated settings which approximate field conditions and rated by experts for adequacy. (Performance assessment by means of structured observations of participants' actual performance on the job was investigated, but discarded as not feasible due to high costs.) In addition, participants' self-ratings of perceived proficiency levels are obtained and compared with observed levels.

Simulations developed for use in the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) have been tailored to the specific situations an administrator will encounter. For example, SEASIM or Special Education Administration Simulation (UCEA, 1973) which are related to program objectives have been rewritten to apply to rural and multi-district programs. In many cases, however, no materials were available, and these had to be developed by project consultants and staff.

The use of simulations as an assessment tool departs from standard procedures; most training programs follow simulations with immediate instruction to improve performance. Instead, the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) uses performance assessment to select areas in which instruction is to be provided. During the participants' field experiences, feedback on simulated performance and further practice on those tasks through course exercises assist in improving performance in deficient areas.

Following instruction, participants are again assessed in those areas in which they were previously deficient to determine the degree of improvement.

b. COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT. Many Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) objectives specify tasks the director of special education is to perform, and demonstration of competency is complete and direct (performance of the task in a setting which simulates actual working conditions). Measurement of these tasks may be considered to be criterion-referenced. However, the knowledge (information, grasp of concepts, and ability to apply them appropriately) required to perform job tasks must be inferred, and consequently domain-referenced testing is used for assessment of achievement in cognitive portions of the training program objectives.

In domain-referenced testing, the goal is to create an extensive pool of items which represents, in miniature, the basic characteristics of some important part of the original universe of knowledge (domain) (Hively, 1974). A domain must be capable of being described very specifically both in terms of content and format. The major advantage of domain-referenced testing is that it allows estimates, from a small sample of items, of the participant's "level of functioning," or the percentage of the total tasks of a specified type which would be answered correctly. The reliability of the test is the accuracy with which the probabilities of correct performance can be estimated. Validity can be assessed by logical analysis of the domain definition, the item generation scheme, and the individual test items (Millman, 1974).

The "domain" referred to for program purposes is an educational objective. Consequently, in

developing assessment procedures for any objective with a cognitive component, an attempt was made to generate a large set of test items which would represent the "pool" for that domain. The number of items generated was limited by practical constraints--cost and (computer) space. A domain or objective is regarded as fixed for the period between revalidation of competencies, but the content of that domain may change at any time, and test questions are periodically reviewed to determine their continued relevance (e.g., a training objective may state that a special education administrator must be cognizant of the requirements of due process, but a change in law or regulation may alter specific due process procedures which the director must follow).

Actual testing, under a domain-referenced measurement method, is done by means of an instrument which is a random selection of those items which measure the objective. For the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) pretests, the items selected for inclusion cover all objectives being assessed, and are randomly "mixed." An estimate is made of the criterion level (e.g., 80 percent correct) which constitutes mastery of each objective (domain), and instruction is provided in those domains where the participant falls below the criterion level. Posttests are developed individually for each participants and they consist of items randomly selected from each domain in which instruction was provided.

Since participants are tested on only a small fraction of the items which measure achievement of each objective, the reliability of a domain-referenced testing procedure is dependent upon the probability that the participant's score on the items to which he/she responds represents the score the participant would attain on the entire (infinite) set of items in that domain. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) uses Bayesian statistical procedures (Novick & Lewis, 1974; Novick & Jackson, 1974) to prescribe the length of the test the participant should receive and to determine the criterion

level which approximates the mastery criterion for the entire domain.

All cognitive assessment information is recorded and scored on computer, and the system developed for use in the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) contains programs and disc storage files which contain the item pool; maintain the status of individual participants in the training project; select, print, and score pre and posttests for each participant; and maintain an ongoing statistical summary of participants' progress through the training program (Hendrix, 1974).

Use of systems models helps to clarify the logical structure of procedure since they are relatively independent of content and also independent of time. Based upon the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) experiences, it is necessary to add some estimates of the amount of time which should be allowed for development of each component of a training program using this model.

The amount of time required for initial determination of the population to be trained will vary with the method used and with the extent of documentation of need required by relevant funding authorities. However, these activities are usually done before a training model is selected, thus, time estimates for this component are not included here.

For development of the remaining components of the model, a *minimum* of one year must be allowed; the amount of staff time and other resources which must be deployed during that year will vary with the extent to which the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) development procedures and content (objectives, item pool for domain-referenced testing, and instructional materials) can be used or adapted. Thus, less effort would be required to develop a preparation program for special education administrators in another state using this model than would be required to develop a comparable program in administration of other human services. One could

also project that less effort would be required to develop an administrative education program than one for teachers or other direct service providers. The procedures, however, would be applicable in any case.

A one year development period is necessitated by the time required for competency identification, due to the inclusion of both identification and validation procedures in the development phase.

The job analysis and goal analysis provide the training objectives, which are necessary input into both the preparation of instruction and development of assessment components. Once objectives are known, course authors can be selected and materials preparation begun. If some use can be made of the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) materials or if instructional materials for objectives identified as high priority are readily available, instructional preparation for a year's instruction can be done in less time. (If instruction is likely to be sequential, some instructional preparation can continue while initial course work is conducted.

The major tasks in developing assessment procedures, if the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) computer programs are used, are preparing an item pool and developing simulated or on the job performance assessment procedures. If many items in the program's master item pool are applicable to a proposed education program, the task may be accomplished in perhaps eight months. If the entire pool must be developed, then a minimum of a year (after training objectives have been determined) must be allowed. Generation of test items is a difficult and often tedious process, and as many persons as are qualified and available should be involved in this process. Development of performance assessment procedures also varies with the extent to which existing simulation materials and other tools can be employed.

6. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

a. *ELIGIBILITY*. Minnesota special education directors are eligible to participate in the program if they indicate interest and meet the following initial selection criteria: limited experiences as a director of special education (less than three years) and little or no formal training in educational administration. These criteria were established to maximize immediate impact of the project in its formative phases.

Following acceptance into the program, a participant's first activities consist of an assessment of individual needs. Participants are administered a cognitive domain-referenced test covering knowledge and application of facts, procedures, and concepts for all objectives in each of the three curriculum areas which have been identified: fiscal management, personnel management, and special education program development.

b. *COGNITIVE DOMAIN-REFERENCED TESTING*. The format of the test is a series of approximately 50 multiple choice, true-false, and similar questions in each of the three curriculum areas. (If available information, such as results of prior training, indicates that a participant has already mastered an area, the test can be shortened accordingly.) Results are analyzed to determine areas in which participants do and do not have requisite knowledge, using the predetermined Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) criteria. Areas of deficit for each participant become his/her training objectives. (Criteria for adequate cognitive levels are established by correlating domain-referenced scores with performance assessment results.)

In addition to the domain-referenced test, assessment includes rating of participant's performance using

simulations of tasks necessary to the position and self-reporting of on the job performance. Simulations are rated independently by a panel of judges, and the majority opinion is the participant's score. As with the domain-referenced test, performance areas are compared with the predetermined criteria, deficits are determined, and the results are used to formulate individual training objectives.

Cognitive pretests can be administered in person or via mail and should be returned and analyzed prior to the performance assessment. Performance simulations are conducted in a workshop setting. The workshop is not only a convenient vehicle for performance assessment, but also provides an opportunity for initial instruction in the objectives for the participants and for program planning with the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) staff. In addition, the workshop provides orientation to the field experiences in which participants are to be engaged.

c. *INSTRUCTION*. The participant's program in the field requires completion of course materials appropriate to his/her needs, provides periodic consultant assistance in improving performance, and allows opportunities for small group interaction and problem solving exercises.

As a result of needs assessment activities, the course materials are divided into three curriculum areas--fiscal, personnel, and program. Within these areas, there is a further breakdown into objectives. Each objective is a separate unit which is color-coded and numbered internally; each objective also includes the following: preface, table of contents, presentation of concepts, source materials, and alternative suggestions for methods of implementing the concept. The participant is sent a set of appropriate field materials and activities for each objective to which the pretest indicated his/her performance to be below the criterion level.

Participants then complete an exercise demonstrating their ability to implement the concept as it applies to their job; in many cases, course exercises are tasks which must be done on the job in any event (such as developing a child study subsystem). Exercises are assessed by field consultants who base their judgments on evidence that the participant has correctly understood the concept and application of the concept is appropriate to the participant's situation. Exercises are rated "acceptable," "incomplete," or "unacceptable," and comments are included.

The exercise part of the experience is generally conducted by mail. Therefore, the cycle of input from course materials, feedback on adequacy of performance, and assistance in improving performance continues throughout the training program.

d. *EVALUATION.* After a participant satisfactorily completes instruction in a curriculum area, the assessment process is repeated, using posttest versions of both the performance simulation and the cognitive posttest for an objective.

e. *CREDIT.* Administrative certification is usually circumvented for entry into the position of special education director. Training offered (i.e., competencies attained) under this program can be directly applied toward future certification as certification requirements are reviewed and if applicants meet other existing requirements. Participants have the option of obtaining graduate credits in educational administration, which can be applied to a degree program for their Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) coursework. However, the student must also meet other graduate requirements currently in existence to qualify for either of these degrees. Participants may also have the option of receiving certification through the use of Special Education Administration Training Program

to meet continuing education requirements established by the state, local, district, or other agency.

D. Outreach of the Generic Model

Thus far, one model has been detailed in conjunction with the competency-based training program, the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP). The Special Education Administration Training Program at the University of Minnesota has two overall objectives: to train leadership personnel with strong competencies in general educational administration, and to provide the specific competencies needed to administer a comprehensive special education program.

As a result of the above program model, other programs can be adopted and utilized to train administrators in other career areas. Two such programs have been proposed for this purpose at the University of Minnesota: a model for competency-based training of lead personnel for special needs programs in vocational education, and a model for competency-based training of administrators in early education programs serving handicapped children.

1. LEAD PERSONNEL FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The 1963 Vocational Education Act added a responsibility for the vocational education of students with special needs. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 made a more explicit definition of this new mandate and of the students who should be served, and the Amendments specified that 15 percent of the federal monies allotted to the states for vocational education must be earmarked for the disadvantaged and 10 percent earmarked for

handicapped students. With this information in perspective, the central focus of the proposal for Lead Personnel for Special Needs Programs in Vocational Education is to design and implement inservice training programs for lead personnel in local (substate) programs for the handicapped and disadvantaged in vocational education. The problem to be met is that, nationally, these programs have not developed their full potential, an important part of which is for reasons that appear to be best described as a managerial shortfall. Those persons who lead vocational education programs for the handicapped and disadvantaged (Special Needs programs) have not had a specific training program available to them. Requested assistance for this program would devise and implement a training program which would equip these leaders for more effective service.

2. EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS SERVING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The need to design and to develop quality educational services for handicapped children in their early years of life is an emerging national problem. This is especially critical for those handicapped children who live in the rural and sparsely populated areas of the country. While programs for handicapped children are being developed in the major population centers, all identified handicapped preschool children are not being served. There is no well-developed model for the organization and administration of programs in urban and rural areas so that the state can respond to the challenge of providing early intervention in the lives of all handicapped children. As a result of these factors a proposal was designed to insure that appropriate intervention strategies are known by administrators of such programs and are incorporated into the early education programs that are now in operation and for those being planned. The project would also serve as a stimulus for program development in unserved communities.

E. Conclusion

The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) has been developed as an attempt to meet critical continuing education needs of special education administrators. At this point the program and model are still regarded as tentative and subject to revision from experience. The Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP) gains additional credence from consideration of the alternatives. Inability to specify and justify competencies appears fraught with danger as court decisions and legislative pressures regarding accountability of programs to educate are added to other general concerns of citizens for education as it is now structured.

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